

Emergency Responder



WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT

May - June 2004

James Mullen named new Washington EMD director

James Mullen, director of emergency management for the city of Seattle, has been selected as the new director of the Washington Emergency Management Division (WEMD), Maj. Gen. Timothy J. Lowenberg, director of the Washington Military Department, announced July 1.

Mullen succeeds Glen L. Woodbury, who left WEMD June 30 to accept a faculty position with the Naval Post Graduate School program in homeland security at Monterey, Calif. Woodbury had served as state emergency division director since 1998.

Lowenberg said Mullen was selected through a nationwide job recruitment that had attracted candidates from out of state as well as from local, state and federal agencies.

Mullen has a sophisticated understanding of current and emergency management issues and "a far-reaching vision of how statewide emergency management and homeland security systems should operate," Lowenberg said.

"Jim's success in integrating the private sector business community into the city's emergency management operations is a model of what we have been aspiring to do throughout the state," said Lowenberg. "He also shares our commitment to providing greater professional assistance training support to local emergency managers and their staffs."

"I am looking forward to joining an excellent organization at State EMD," said Mullen. "Together we will maintain the strong programs that currently exist, and collaborate

Continued on page 2—



Paul McNeill, left, interim emergency operations section supervisor, describes the functions of the state emergency operations room to a delegation of 14 government and communications officials from Thailand. The delegation visited EMD from May 14-19 to learn the operations involved in a centralized 9-1-1 system for possible implementation in their country. (EMD photo by Rob Harper)

Woodbury describes future emergency management role

Emergency managers are the right people to plan and coordinate how to address new homeland security threats, according to outgoing Emergency Management Division (EMD) Director Glen Woodbury.

Woodbury outlined his concept at the Partners in Preparedness Conference last April in what he acknowledged was a farewell address in the Washington emergency management community before leaving EMD June 30.

The new challenges for emergency managers include international threats, concerns for secure borders and bioterrorism response, and additional requirements for prevention and detection of terrorism threats, he said.

Woodbury said emergency managers will need to expand beyond their traditional focus on mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery to address these homeland security issues.

But he said the emergency management system can be enlarged and strengthened to meet these concerns. "Emergency management is responsible for homeland security in the state of Washington. We are homeland security in the state of Washington. We don't have a reason to create a new system of homeland security in the state of Washington."

Emergency management already has completed the coordination, collaboration and planning to prepare for existing natural and man-made hazards, he said, contending that the same type of collaborative and coordinated planning and analysis are called for in combating terrorism.

Woodbury went on to urge emergency managers to be flexible and to entertain new ideas. "If you don't have debate, you have a lukewarm solution that looks good until disaster strikes."

Ceremony dedicates new weather radio transmitter sites

State and federal officials formally dedicated two National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio transmitters June 11 to expand all hazards alert and warning areas in south Puget Sound and southwest Washington.

The two new transmitters, which began operations earlier in the year, are located at Capital Peak west of Olympia and Davis Peak near Woodland. The Capital Peak site provides NOAA weather alerts, watches and warnings and Emergency Alert System messages to the upper Nisqually River Basin which is subject to both flooding and to mudflow or lahar events from Mt. Rainier. The Davis Peak transmitter serves the upper Lewis River Basin which also is subject to flooding events.

Chris Hill, meteorologist in charge at the NOAA National Weather Service (NWS) weather forecast office in Seattle, said about 95 per cent of Washington's residents now have access to life-saving weather-related messages. "Citizens can have flood and weather information available at their fingertips any time of the day or night. In the past 10 years, the Washington state system has grown from nine weather radio stations to 21 stations.

"This is another important expansion of the state of Washington's alert and warning system to areas threatened by several major hazards," said Maj. Gen. Timothy J. Lowenberg, director of the Washington Military Department that oversees the state's Emergency Management Division. "For the first time, the system will provide residents of the Nisqually and Lewis river basin drainages with emergency information and peace of mind enjoyed by citizens throughout the other service areas."

According to Lowenberg, NOAA weather radio is a key component in the state's emergency alert and warning system. "We use NOAA Weather Radio in our tsunami warning systems along our coast, for mud flow warnings on rivers that originate on Mt. Rainier, and for notification of child abductions through the Amber Alert system." Local emergency managers have helped promote and educate local businesses and citizens about NOAA Weather Radio and its "all-hazards" warning capabilities.

The Capitol Peak transmitter in Olympia provides NOAA weather information on 162.475 MHz. The transmitter also provides expanded weather radio service into Hood Canal, south Puget Sound, east Grays Harbor County, and as far east as Mt. Rainier National Park. The new location was a partnership of South Sound Broadcasting and NWS.

The Davis Peak transmitter, which broadcasts on 162.525 MHz, was built through a partnership between NOAA and PacifiCorp, which operates dams on the Lewis River, said Sheila Holden of PacifiCorp community relations. The transmitter "is a good example of public/private partnerships that have tangible benefits for Lewis River-area residents and help with the overall state coverage."

FEMA rejects state appeal of winter storm disaster request

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rejected Washington's appeal of the agency's earlier decision to deny a winter storms disaster area declaration for Clark and Skamania counties.

Gov. Gary Locke last April asked FEMA to reconsider its denial of the two-county disaster declaration for damages sustained in a winter storm that struck southwest Washington and northwest Oregon last Jan. 6-10.

The storm's snow and ice closed roadways, knocked down trees and forced the closure of all schools and most businesses in the two counties for as long as four days. Storm-related damages in the two counties were estimated at more than \$4.2 million.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Undersecretary Michael Brown, however, rejected the appeal in a letter sent to Locke in early June.

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Continued from page 1—

on initiatives that bind the State's private and public resources.

"Local and county emergency managers are largely unrecognized resources. While their work receives some notice during a disaster, it is their day-to-day efforts to prepare their communities to deal with any and all hazards that make the people of their jurisdictions, and the state, safer," he added.

Mullen, who holds a master's degree in education from Western Washington University, has been Seattle's emergency management director for the past 12 years.

Mullen will assume the WEMD director's position in late July following the National Governor's Association conference in Seattle.

Umatilla Depot permit set for final state review

Following a successful emergency response exercise May 5, the Umatilla Chemical Depot turned its focus to the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission's final review of the permit to incinerate the depot's chemical weapons.

Public testimony at a May 20 commission hearing in Hermiston strongly favored allowing the incineration of the 3,717 tons of chemical weapons stored at the depot. The commission has scheduled an August meeting to review additional studies and reports on the depot's permit.

Meanwhile, the Umatilla Chemical Depot facility project general manager Doug Hamrick notified the Office of Program Manager for the Elimination of Chemical Weapons in late May that the Washington Demilitarization Company was ready to start incineration operations.

Agencies hold statewide response exercise

Washington Emergency Management Division joined with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to facilitate a statewide response exercise during the April 22 "Drop, Cover, and Hold" Day.

The exercise involved two associated earthquake events; one in the Tacoma area and the second near Wenatchee. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's new HAZUS-MH Loss Estimation Model was used to generate a realistic overall scenario.

Included were estimates of damage to bridges and buildings in specific areas. These estimates were used to generate realistic, coherent exercise inputs that were sent to WSDOT regions for appropriate action.

Using HAZUS, the transportation department's emergency operations staff in Olympia were able to gain statewide situational awareness to prioritize and direct response and recovery actions. "Drop, Cover, and Hold Day" was the first Northwest use of HAZUS-MH to support an exercise by a major state agency.

Tacoma, Pierce County plan joint EOC facility

Pierce County and the city of Tacoma announced in late May they will develop a \$5 million regional emergency operations center near the county's annex building in Tacoma.

Projected to be open by the end of next year, the center will be located in an 83,700 square-foot former printing plant that is to be remodeled. The center will house the joint emergency operations center, Pierce County Emergency Management and storage space for the region's Urban Search and Rescue team, and county and city records.



Hoh Tribal Nation storyteller Viola Riebe, left, received a Gubernatorial Certificate of Commendation May 11 at a ceremony in La Push. George Crawford, Washington Emergency Management Division earthquake program manager, presented the award which honored her work in the video "Run To High Ground" about coastal earthquake and tsunami hazards. (Forks Forum photo by George McCormick)

Washington allocates 2004 Urban Area Security Initiative grant money for state and local projects

State and local officials announced in early June a range of 2004 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant projects to improve security and emergency preparedness in the Puget Sound metropolitan area.

The federal UASI grant assigned \$16.4 million for state and local security and preparedness projects in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties and in the city of Seattle. The grant also provided \$795,280 for Sound Transit security projects.

Projects funded by Washington State's 2004 UASI grant will include:

- three law enforcement boats that will enhance the region's marine security.
- a network that allows a video downlink from helicopters to be shared with command sites from the scene of incidents and will complete a communications link of the State and regional response centers in Seattle and King, Pierce and Snohomish counties.
- a public education campaign to inform Puget Sound area residents about personal preparedness and protection from chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive incidents.
- security improvements for the University of Washington and emergency response training and weapons of mass destruction response equipment for Washington State Ferries.
- equipment upgrades for the Washington State Department of Health Public Health Laboratories and for the Washington State Patrol's State Crime Laboratory.

Jim Schoonover retires after 12 years with EMD

Veteran Unit Manager Jim Schoonover left the Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) June 18 for a position with a homeland security services company.

"I will still be working with our local emergency managers and state agencies as well as with EMD. It has been a great ride that I hope to continue," said Schoonover. "Notice, I was not bold enough to go far so I can still maintain all my relationships. Thanks for all (that) each of you have done for me."

Schoonover joined EMD in 1992 as a fixed facility planner after completing 28 years of service in the U.S. Army. He worked as a Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program planner and as managing director of the Disaster Recovery Unit and mitigation before he became manager of the Operations Unit in 1995.

In 2002, Schoonover was named manager of the Policy, Programs and Training Unit, which changed last year to the Preparedness Unit.

State Personnel appointments and retirements

Ute Weber was named Homeland Security/Terrorism Coordinator in the Homeland Security Section of the Preparedness Unit. An EMD employee since 2001, Weber had been program assistant in the Mitigation, Analysis and Plans Unit.

Gerald Jensen was appointed State Exercise Program Manager May 5 in the Programs and Training Section of the Preparedness Unit. Jensen joined Washington Emergency Management in 1999 as an exercise training officer.

Michael Gordon was selected as State Training Program Manager in the Programs and Training Section of the Preparedness Unit. Gordon has been a training program coordinator since joining EMD in 1998.

Curt Kyle, telecommunications coordinator in the Telecommunications Section of the Response and Recovery Unit, retired June 30 after 13 years of service in the Emergency Management Division. Kyle, who came to EMD after serving 25 years in the U.S. Army, has plans to travel in his retirement.

Steve DeBow receives U.S. Army public service award

Steve DeBow, who has supervised EMD's Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) for the past 12 years, received the Department of the Army's Commanders Award for Public Service at June's CSEPP national conference in Seattle.

The award honored his outstanding service to the Washington state CSEP Program from August 1990 to June 2004, stating that his "dedication to duty and enthusiasm have not only ensured the safety of Washington's citizens, it has also greatly helped the overall Oregon/Washington/Tribal CSEPP community."

Bob Oenning re-elected NENA regional vice president

Bob Oenning, E911 Program Administrator and an Emergency Number Professional (ENP), was re-elected to his second two-year term as Western Regional Vice President of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) at their annual conference held in Tampa June 13-17, 2004.

The Western Region VP's territory encompasses Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Hawaii, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, US Territories in the Pacific region, Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Island Nations, and the nations on the continent of Asia.

NENA's mission is to foster the technological advancement, availability, and implementation of a universal emergency telephone number system. In carrying out its mission, NENA promotes research, planning, training and education. The protection of human life, the preservation of property and the maintenance of general community security are among NENA's objectives.

Benton County names Spencer new EM director

Robert Spencer was named Benton County Emergency Manager June 1. He previously was the Emergency Management Director in Maricopa County, Ariz.

James Soukup was appointed June 14 as Benton County's Southeast Communications Center manager. He formerly was director of emergency operations at the Citrus County, Fla., Sheriff's Office.

Ed Reed retires Aug. 1 from Pierce County post

Ed Reed, Pierce County emergency management program manager since 1997, announced June 28 he will leave his post Aug. 1 to become a program manager with the Terrorism Research Center in Washington, D.C.



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The Washington Emergency Management Division, including the State Emergency Operations Center, is located in Building 20 on Camp Murray, located at exit 122 on Interstate 5 south of Tacoma, Washington.